

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. Reconsideration of the subject patent application in view of the present remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 5, 9 and 15 are amended.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsujikawa (U.S. pat no 5,991,435) in view of Kawahara (U.S. pat no 5,608,816) and official notice (MPEP 2144.03). Applicants respectfully disagree for at least the following reasons.

Regarding the amended claim 1, neither Tsujikawa nor Kawahara discloses, teaches or renders foreseeable a grouping frame for enclosing **images of only the pattern holes** corresponding to the chosen grouping condition. Support for the amendment is provided in Figures 13A-C which show grouping frames 45a, 45b, 45c and 45d for enclosing the images of the pattern holes 16a, 16b, 16c and 16d.

Tsujikawa does not disclose the grouping frame, since Tsujikawa does not disclose grouping means for classifying and grouping the element position data into data groups as admitted by the examiner in the Office action.

The Office action states that Kawahara discloses that first grouping condition is grouping circular holes without any overlap between enclosing frames, second grouping condition is grouping with overlapping enclosing frame, the attribute grouping condition is grouped by the

number of hole in each enclosed frame (figure 9B). However, the frames of Kawahara do not enclose any images of the pattern holes through which cream solder is printed on a substrate (such as the images of the pattern holes 16a, 16b, 16c and 16d shown in Figure 13A), but merely enclose **circles and double circles** which are only **symbols** to denote the referential feature information of non-defect data and the feature information of inspected data, respectively (Kawahara; column 27, lines 36-41). These circles and double circles are merely symbols, and are not the images of the pattern holes.

In addition, the frames of Kawahara do not enclose the double circles corresponding to the chosen grouping condition, but enclose the double circles based on whether the inspected data is judged to accord with the non-defect data or to differ from the non-defect data (Kawahara; column 27, lines 51-63). In fact, the frames of Kawahara merely show the allowable margin of positional errors in the inspected data differing from the non-defect data. There is no disclosure in Kawahara that the frames show any grouping condition.

The official notice is merely cited for the use of the display means, and thus is silent about the grouping frame.

Accordingly, the combination of Tsujikawa, Kawahara and official notice does not meet all of the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, the asserted combination of Tsujikawa, Kawahara and official notice does not render claim 1 obvious. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection as it applies to claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Similar arguments will apply to claim 5.

Claims 2-4 and 6-8 which are dependent from claims 1 and 5, respectively should be allowable for at least the same reason as claims 1 and 5.

Claims 9-20 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsujikawa (U.S. pat no 5,991,435) in view of Kawahara (U.S. pat no 5,608,816). Applicants respectfully disagree for at least the following reasons.

Regarding the amended claim 9, neither Tsujikawa nor Kawahara discloses, teaches or renders foreseeable a grouping frame for enclosing **images of only the pattern holes** corresponding to the chosen grouping condition. Support for the amendment is provided in Figures 13A-C which show grouping frames 45a, 45b, 45c and 45d for enclosing the images of the pattern holes 16a, 16b, 16c and 16d.

Tsujikawa does not disclose the grouping frame, since Tsujikawa does not disclose grouping means for classifying and grouping the element position data into data groups as admitted by the examiner in the Office action.

Kawahara does not disclose the grouping frame, as discussed above regarding claim 1.

Accordingly, the combination of Tsujikawa, Kawahara and official notice does not meet all of the limitations of claim 9. Therefore, the asserted combination of Tsujikawa, Kawahara and official notice does not render claim 9 obvious. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection as it applies to claim 9 is respectfully requested.

Similar arguments will apply to claim 15.

Claims 10-14 and 16-20 which are dependent from claims 9 and 15, respectively should be allowable for at least the same reason as claims 9 and 15.

In consideration of the foregoing analysis, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the examiner is invited to

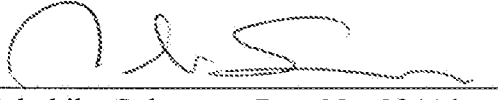
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initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No.: NGB-35948.

Respectfully submitted,

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